



MILLENNIUM
CHALLENGE CORPORATION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Lessons Learned from MCC Land Evaluations
World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty
May 2024

Background

- Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)
 - US government agency established in 2004
 - Mission - “Poverty reduction through economic growth”
 - Commitment to independent evaluation- required of all projects
- Land and property rights projects have been an important component of MCC’s portfolio throughout its 20-year history
- 15 independent evaluations of MCC land projects have been completed to date, 3 more are in progress
- *Lessons Learned from MCC Land Evaluations* paper – work in progress
 1. Synthesize findings from evaluations of MCC land projects published during MCC’s first 20 years
 2. Identify lessons for future land programming and land evaluations

Overview

1. MCC 's Land Programs and Evaluations
2. Synthesis of MCC Land Evaluation Findings
3. Lessons Learned from MCC Land Evaluations

MCC Land Portfolio

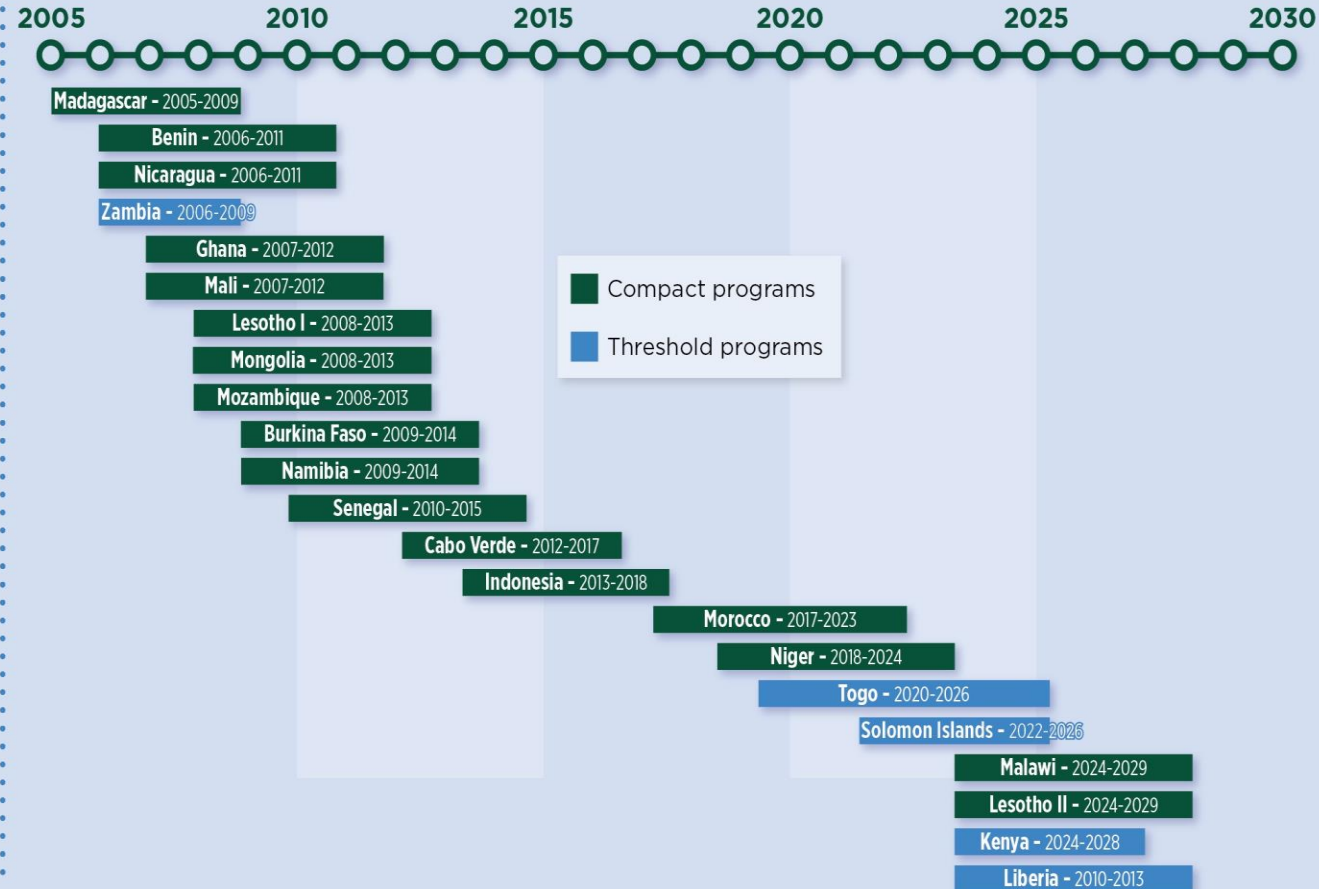
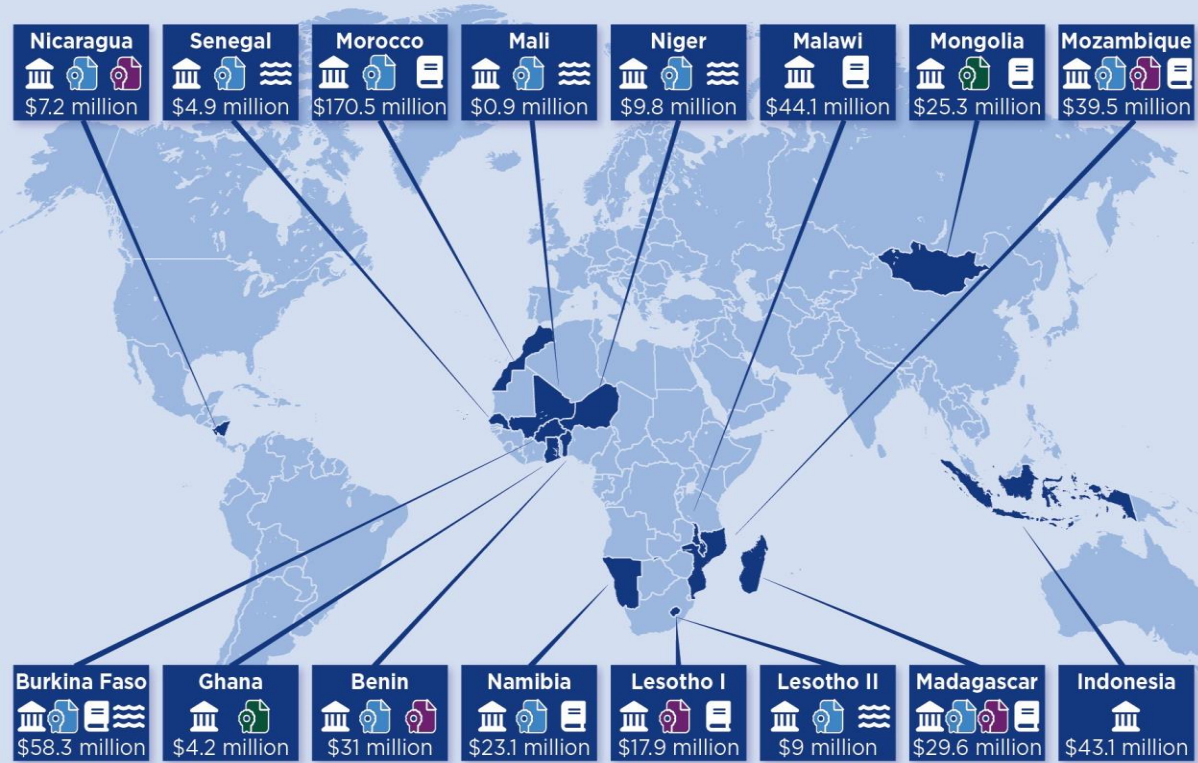
Institutional Strengthening

Formalization of land rights

-  Rural
-  Peri-urban
-  Urban

Policy, legal, regulatory reform

Irrigation and land



Evaluations of MCC Land Projects

- MCC requires independent third party evaluations of all projects
- Methods employed by MCC land evaluators:

1. Impact evaluations (4)

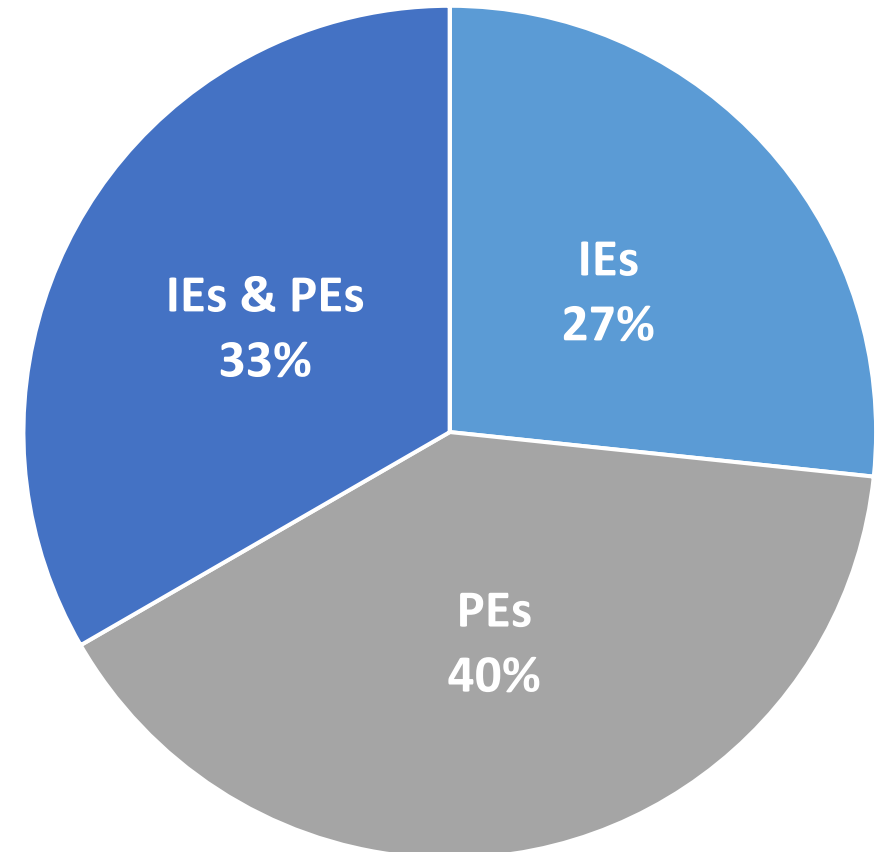
- Multiple rounds of quantitative survey data
- Design uses counterfactual to measure causal impact of program

2. Performance evaluations (6)

- Qualitative data collection and analysis (key informant interviews and focus group discussions)
- May include descriptive analysis of administrative or limited survey data

3. Combined impact and performance evaluations (5)

- Evaluations that include both rigorous IE and PE methods



Evaluations Included in Synthesis

Country	Program	Project Close Year	Evaluation Type: Impact / Performance	Exposure Period Between Project Close and Endline Data Collection (years)
Benin	Access to Land - Rural	2011	IE	4
Ghana	Agriculture - Land Tenure	2012	IE	4
Mozambique	Land Tenure Services	2013	IE & PE	6
Lesotho	Land Administration Reform (2)	2013	IE & PE	6
Mongolia	Property Rights - Peri-Urban Rangeland Leasing	2013	IE	5-6
Mongolia	Property Rights - Land Registration System	2013	PE	5-6
Burkina Faso	Rural Land Governance	2014	IE & PE	9-11
Namibia	Communal Land Support	2014	PE	2
Cape Verde	Land Management for Investment	2017	PE	4
Indonesia	Green Prosperity: PLUP	2018	PE	2-3

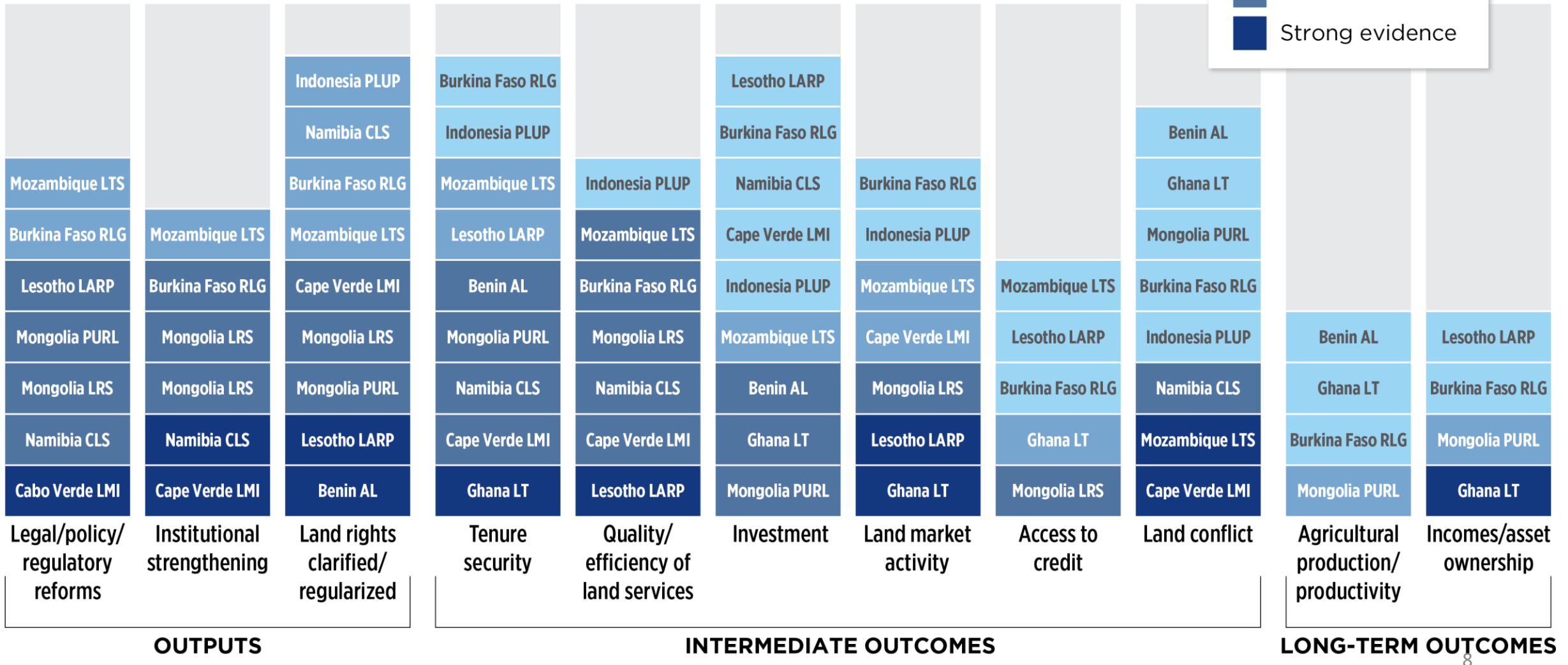
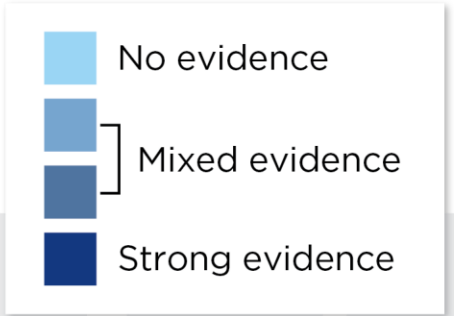
Synthesis of MCC Land Evaluation Findings

- **Outputs / outcomes most commonly included in MCC land evals:**

Outputs	Intermediate outcomes – short term	Intermediate outcomes – med. term	Long term outcomes
1. Legal / policy / regulatory reforms	1. Perceived tenure security	1. Investment	1. Ag. production / productivity
2. Institutional strengthening	2. Quality / efficiency of land services	2. Land market activity	2. HH income / assets
3. Land rights clarified / regularized		3. Access to credit	
		4. Land conflict incidence	

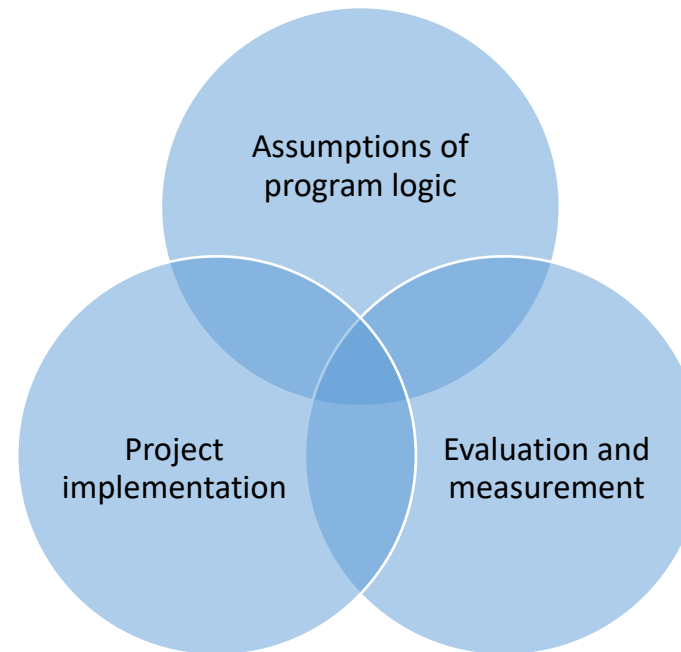
- Gender differentiated impacts & women’s empowerment
- Sustainability of outputs

Synthesis of MCC Land Eval. Findings



Synthesis of MCC Land Evaluation Findings

- Assessments of outputs and implementation in evaluation reports tend to be limited
- Obtaining “strong evidence” requires the confluence of several factors:



- Difficult to identify correct explanation for null impact evaluation findings

Synthesis of MCC Land Eval. Findings: Gender and Sustainability

Gender

- Gender differentiation of impacts on perceived tenure security both + and -
- Impacts on women's labor allocation in Ghana LT and Benin AL
- Mixed findings on intra-household bargaining power

Sustainability

- Generally positive findings on sustainability of legal/policy reform, institutional strengthening
- Sustainability of land information systems benefits from introduction early in project

Lessons for Programming and Policy

I. Household-level impacts that can be directly measured by evaluations cannot fully capture the link between strengthening property rights and economic growth

- Tenure security => ag. productivity link for smallholders often seen as key justification for land projects, but:
 - Investment and allocative efficiency impacts difficult to capture empirically, conditional on other factors and do not always occur
- Other benefit streams can be important, e.g. access to mortgage finance in Lesotho LARP
- Indirect sources of economic benefits are important and should receive greater emphasis- e.g. conflict risk, investment climate

Lessons for Programming and Policy

2. Project designs should not assume demand for formalization will materialize, even when there is apparent need and/or interest

- Tenure insecurity is not always a deterrent to investment
- Post-project distribution of land documents did not happen as anticipated in some cases
- Cost can be a deterrent even when low
- Outreach and sensitization campaigns appear to be effective at increasing interest in formalization

Lessons for Programming and Policy

3. Avoid project designs that are overly ambitious in terms of complexity, scale, and/or need for coordination across sectors

- Implementation and coordination across activities are often more challenging than expected
- Accelerated / incomplete implementation can lead to arbitrary prioritization of some components over others, compromising sustainability- e.g. training and troubleshooting for Land Information Systems
- Particularly applicable to MCC given 5-year project time limit

Lessons for Land Evaluations

- 1. Evaluations should always include a thorough assessment of actual outputs and implementation**

- 2. Devote attention to compiling administrative and project data for evaluation during project implementation**
 - Very few evaluations included explicit comparison of project outputs to targets
 - However, findings related to outputs were often useful to MCC
 - Understanding implementation issues can also be important to explain other findings
 - MCC's recently revised evaluation policy places greater focus on implementation

Lessons for Land Evaluations

3. Though necessary for measuring economic outcomes, long exposure periods entail substantial risks and limitations. In determining the appropriate exposure period for an evaluation, the tradeoffs should be carefully considered

- Literature indicates long exposure periods (~5+ years) are needed to capture impacts on key outcomes such as agricultural productivity and household incomes
- However, long exposure periods for impact evaluations entail high risks of compromised design that are costly and complicated to mitigate
- They can also reduce the utility of other aspects of the evaluation in important ways

Lessons for Land Evaluations

4. Impact evaluations should incorporate qualitative components following preliminary quantitative analysis

- Rigorous impact evaluation methods can yield uniquely compelling evidence
- Quantitative estimates of impact alone can be difficult to explain and interpret
- Where IEs include qualitative component, data collection tends to be simultaneous rather than sequential

Recap of Lessons Learned

Programming and Policy:

1. Household-level impacts that can be directly measured by evaluations cannot fully capture the link between strengthening property rights and economic growth
2. Project designs should not assume demand for formalization will materialize, even when there is apparent need and/or interest
3. Avoid project designs that are overly ambitious in terms of complexity, scale, and/or need for coordination across sectors

Evaluation:

1. Evaluations should always include a thorough assessment of actual outputs and implementation
2. Devote attention to compiling administrative and project data for evaluation during project implementation
3. Though necessary for measuring economic outcomes, long exposure periods entail substantial risks and limitations. In determining the appropriate exposure period for an evaluation, the tradeoffs should be carefully considered
4. Impact evaluations should incorporate qualitative components following preliminary quantitative analysis